



HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of Hailsham Town Council held at the Hailsham Civic Community Hall, Vicarage Lane on Wednesday 24th September 2025 at 7.00pm.

HTC/25/3
/135 **Present:** Councillors: A. Blake-Coggins, G. Blake-Coggins, C. Bryant (Chairman), B. Carpenter, D. Chapman, B. Holbrook, P. Holbrook, C. Mitchell, K. Nicholls, A. M. Ricketts and G. White.

136 **Officers in Attendance**

Mr J. Harrison (Town Clerk), Mr. T. Lee (Operations Manager) Mrs K. Giddings and Mr D. Saxby.

Also in attendance: East Sussex County Councillor G. Fox.

137 **Public Question Time**

A member of the public addressed the meeting. He was concerned at the number of councillors who were not attending meetings.

A member of the public said that he attended the meeting of Wealden District Council earlier that day and had learnt that Hailsham Town Council no longer had the highest precept in the district. He asked councillors to consider the cost implications when suggesting new projects.

He asked how the Post Office was faring. Councillor Mitchell responded that the Council subsidy had fallen. He was hopeful that now the Banking Hub was running, it would soon be breaking even.

138 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received and accepted from Councillors A. Clarke, F. Clarke, M. Laxton, D. Rusu and K.M. Smith.

139 **Declarations of Interest**

None were presented.

140 **Confirmation of Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Meeting of Hailsham Town Council held 23rd July 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

141 **Chairman's Update**

The Chairman said that the Hailsham Festival had once again been a great success.

He had attended the memorial service for Flying Officer Percy Burton which was very moving and did Hailsham proud.

142 **Town Clerk's Update**

The Town Clerk reported updated the meeting on staffing issues. There were two members of the Senior Management Team on sick leave. Getting staff paid was the priority.

143 **East Sussex County Council Update**

Both county councillors had submitted written reports that had been circulated with the agenda.

Councillor Fox updated the meeting on discussions taking place on local government devolution.

RESOLVED to note the County Councillors' updates.

144 **Wealden District Council Update**

Councillor G. Blake-Coggins reported that he had attended a meeting on the devolution at Wealden.

Councillor White said that no decision on the options had been made.

Standing Orders

145.1 **RESOLVED** that the amendments to Standing Orders that stood adjourned from the meeting held on 23rd July 2025 be accepted.

145.2 Councillor Carpenter asked for his abstention from voting be recorded.

146.1 Councillor Carpenter proposed that a record of all votes be recorded in future and this be reflected in the Council's Standing Orders. This was seconded by Councillor P. Holbrook.

Councillor Mitchell spoke against the proposal, stating that this would go against the principle of collective responsibility.

146.2 **RESOLVED** that a decision on the proposal for recording of all votes be adjourned until the next Council meeting.

Committee Recommendations to Council

147 **Strategy Committee 28th July 2025 – Strategic Plan**

The Strategy Committee had recommended to Council that a part-time qualified HR Professional/Manager is built into the Town Council's staffing structure (for 16 hours per week), subject to the budget being available.

A motion on this matter had been submitted to Council and would be debated under agenda item 11.

148 **Communities Committee – 2nd September 2025 – Street Markets**

The Communities Committee had resolved to extend the trial period of the Friday

markets to allow for further feedback on these trials.

The Chair of the Communities Committee, Councillor Ricketts spoke and referred to Mrs Giddings written report that had been circulated with the agenda.

She said that the move to Blackman's Yard had been successful and had saved money as overtime was not being paid for Saturday working for Hailsham Town Council staff.

She proposed having two further markets to assess the trial in greater detail, followed by a recess of the markets until spring.

Councillor Ricketts thanked Mr Lee, Mrs Giddings, Mr Hall and Councillor A. Clarke for their efforts with the Market.

Councillor Carpenter said that the figures were worrying and that the market was not working.

RESOLVED to hold two further Friday markets, followed by a recess until spring to allow for a decision on the future of the market to be taken by the Communities Committee.

Councillor Carpenter requested that the vote be recorded.

Councillors A. Blake-Coggins, G. Blake-Coggins, Bryant, Chapman, Mitchell, Nicholls, Ricketts and White voted in favour.

Councillor Carpenter voted against.

Councillor B. Holbrook and P. Holbrook abstained from voting.

149 Neighbourhood Plan Committee – 6th September 2025 – Projects (To consider the costings for A22 connectivity)

The Neighbourhood Plan Committee had resolved to recommend to Council that £199,686 be allocated from CIL to fund the A22 connectivity works.

RESOLVED to allocate £200,000 from CIL money for the A22 connectivity works and refer to the Assets Committee before progressing.

Councillor Carpenter requested that the vote be recorded.

Councillors A. Blake-Coggins, G. Blake-Coggins, Bryant, Chapman, Mitchell, Nicholls, Ricketts and White voted in favour.

Councillors Carpenter, B. Holbrook and P. Holbrook voted against.

150 Assets Management Committee – 18th September 2025 – Graffiti in Hailsham

The Assets Management Committee had resolved to recommend to Council that it allocates up to £6,000 from CIL for graffiti boards to be attached to the containers on the Maurice Thornton Playing Field (£1,000 per board, with two boards on three containers).

RESOLVED that up to £6,000 from CIL for graffiti boards to be attached to the

containers on the Maurice Thornton Playing Field.

Councillor Carpenter requested that the vote be recorded.

The resolution was unanimously agreed.

- 151 The Assets Management Committee recommended to Council that it provides 20% match-funding from CIL for the Graffiti Removal 'City Washer' Vehicle, a total cost of £55,000 and, therefore, an allocation of £11,000, with the remainder of the project to be applied for as a CLIF project from Wealden District Council.

RESOLVED that the Council provides 20% match-funding from CIL for the Graffiti Removal 'City Washer' Vehicle, a total cost of £55,000 and, therefore, an allocation of £11,000, with the remainder of the project to be applied for as a CLIF project from Wealden District Council; if CLIF is not available, further discussion would take place before proceeding.

Councillor Carpenter requested that the vote be recorded.

The resolution was unanimously agreed.

- 152 Assets Management Committee – 18th September 2025 – Pet Cemetery

The Assets Management Committee had resolved to recommend to Council that £1,500 is allocated from CIL funds for the basic work required for the Pet Cemetery project.

Councillors G. Blake-Coggins and Ricketts spoke in favour of the recommendation.

Councillor P. Holbrook said that the area identified was not the correct location.

Councillor Carpenter said that the item should be returned to the Assets Management Committee for a more detailed report.

RESOLVED that £1,500 is allocated from CIL funds for the basic work required for the Pet Cemetery project.

Councillor Carpenter requested that the vote be recorded.

Councillors A. Blake-Coggins, G. Blake-Coggins, Bryant, Chapman, Mitchell, Nicholls and Ricketts voted in favour.

Councillors Carpenter, B. Holbrook and P. Holbrook voted against.

Councillor White abstained from voting.

- 153 Assets Management Committee – 19th September 2025 – Street Light

The Assets Management Committee had recommended to Council that £3,500 is allocated from CIL for the installation of a solar light at Eastwell Place.

Councillor P. Holbrook said he had visited the area whilst it was dark and that in his opinion the situation would be greatly helped by having the hedges cut back. He suggested sending the matter back to the Assets Management Committee.

RESOLVED that £3,500 is allocated from CIL for the installation of a solar light at Eastwell Place.

Councillor Carpenter requested that the vote be recorded.

Councillors A. Blake-Coggins, G. Blake-Coggins, Bryant, Chapman, Mitchell, Nicholls, Ricketts and White voted in favour.

Councillor Carpenter voted against.

Councillors B. Holbrook and P. Holbrook abstained from voting.

154 Assets Management Committee – 19th September 2025 – Tree Budget

The Assets Management Committee had recommended to Council that £15,000 be reallocated to the Tree Budget from General Reserves, as it had previously been moved from the current budget.

RESOLVED that £15,000 be reallocated to the Tree Budget from General Reserves.

Councillor Carpenter requested that the vote be recorded.

The vote in favour was unanimous.

155 Assets Management Committee – 19th September 2025 – HIVE Events Stage

The Assets Management Committee had recommended to Council that up to £14,000 be allocated from CIL money for the purchase of the HIVE events stage.

RESOLVED that the allocate up to £14,000 from CIL money for the purchase of the HIVE events stage.

Councillor Carpenter requested that the vote be recorded.

Councillors A. Blake-Coggins, G. Blake-Coggins, Bryant, Carpenter, Chapman, Mitchell, Nicholls, Ricketts and White voted in favour.

Councillors B. Holbrook and P. Holbrook abstained from voting.

Motion – Staffing Matters

156.1 Councillor Nicholls proposed the following motion. It was seconded by Councillor Chapman.

As a result of learnings from recent and past matters at HTC, and in light of the lack of HR qualifications and expertise within in HTC council officers, and the legal and HR risks that the growing council are now exposed to, I propose the following:

To Resolve that Hailsham Town Council will employ a CIPD Qualified Human Resources Manager, with a minimum Level 5 qualification in HR focus (as opposed to Learning and Development), with a minimum of 5 years experience in HR, two of which must be post level 5 qualification, and go out to advert immediately upon this motion being supported, aiming to have filled the post by Jan 1 2026, but no later than the end of Q1 2026.

This post will be HR qualified as opposed to L&D qualified.

Qualified experienced HR Managers provide strategic leadership and support for all Human Resource functions, providing up to date information and advice on employment law, facilitating management of financial risk to HTC, ensuring compliance with regulations and fostering employee development whilst aligning HR Strategies with business objectives to enhance organisational effectiveness and employee well being.

This vital post will add value to HTC and address the current HR needs of an expanding and diverse workforce

As a member of professional body, it will be incumbent upon the successful candidate to maintain their CPD, ensuring up to date knowledge for HTC's benefit.

The role requires a minimum of 18hrs with a blend of interpersonal skills and a deep understanding of HR regulations and Employment Law policies and procedures.

For clarity, the person employed must:

- *have minimum level 5 professional qualifications in the HR field*
- *must be a member of a professional body relating to HR undertaking regular CPD beyond HTC requirements*
- *-those qualifications to be specifically HR focused as opposed to learning and development*
- *have 5 years experience in HR*
- *minimum of 2 years post level 5 experience.*

Councillor Nicholls said that this motion was not an attack on current members of staff. Bringing this motion to Council was out of frustration that the need for Human Resources expertise had been raised in other fora had not resulted in any progress. She said that need for expertise sooner rather than later.

On 28th July 2025, the Strategy Committee had resolved to recommend to Council that a qualified Human Resources professional be employed for 16 hours a week, subject to budget. Concerns about the lack of HR expertise has also been raised at the Staffing Committee.

Councillor Nicholls spoke about the qualifications she thought were needed.

Councillor Carpenter spoke against the motion saying that the funding for the post was not budgeted for.

156.2

Councillors B. and P. Holbrook left the meeting at 10.00pm.

156.3

Suspension of Standing Order

RESOLVED to suspend Standing Order 1x to allow the debate to continue and to extend the meeting beyond three hours.

Debate resumed on the motion proposed by Councillor Nicholls.

RESOLVED that Councillor Nicholls motion be carried.

157 Councillor Carpenter requested that a rollcall of how members voted be recorded.

Councillors A. Blake-Coggins, G. Blake-Coggins, Bryant, Chapman, Mitchell, Nicholls, Ricketts and White voted in favour of the motion.

Councillor Carpenter voted against the motion.

158 **Policies**

RESOLVED to adopt the Hailsham Town Council policies as circulated with the agenda, and to refer the membership of Policies Working Group to the Finance and Governance Committee.

159 **Confidential Business**

RESOLVED that the press and public are excluded during discussion on during the discussion on agenda items 14 and 15 as it concerns: the beginning of legal proceedings, terms and conditions of service or negotiations for contracts, (in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders No, 1E).

160 **Devolution Agenda**

RESOLVED to note the report and arrange a meeting of the Trusts to discuss future arrangements.

161 **Seeds of Hope Agreement**

RESOLVED to agree the final report on the terms of the licence.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.25pm.

CHAIRMAN